

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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## UNPRECEDENTED LISTING OF 216 SPECIES AS ENDANGERED PROPOSED BY INTERIOR

The brown bear of Tibet, the Asian elephant, the mountain zebra of southern Africa, the Bactrian camel of Mongolia, and the chamois of Italy are among the more conspicuous species involved in an unprecedented proposal by Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to add to the Endangered Species List 216 species of plants and animals now facing extinction in the United States and abroad.

This proposed action, published in the September 19 Federal Register, would provide upon complete processing the plants and animals with the legal protection of this Nation's Endangered Species Act as an aid to reducing international commerce in them.

The species in the proposal include 45 plants, 26 mollusks, 2 fish, 28 reptiles, 6 amphibians, 44 birds, and 65 mammals.

This action will supplement existing international regulatory mechanisms intended to protect these species. The 216 species are those listed as "critical" by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna which has been ratified by the United States Congress and entered into force in July. Seventeen other nations have ratified it to date. A limited no-trade, dual permit system is in effect among these countries which have ratified the Convention. As more nations ratify it, this system could provide a satisfactory international regulator.

Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to extend the protection of the Endangered Species Act to these animals and plants so that no American citizen may engage in commerce of any sort in the animals, plants, their parts, or products.

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The signing of the Convention on March 3, 1973, in effect acknowledged the endangered status of all of these species, and the Fish and Wildlife Service believes that these animals, therefore, merit consideration for listing on the official Endangered Species List.

The Convention established a system of regulations to prevent the over-exploitation of world species. The species are listed in three appendices depending upon the degree to which the species are threatened with extinction and the contribution that trade makes to that threat.

The first appendix--the most critical listing--includes all species threatened with extinction which are or could in the future be affected by trade. Trade in these animals by parties to the Convention is subject to particularly strict regulation to guard against further jeopardizing their survival.

The first appendix presently lists 375 animals and 45 floral species. Approximately 50 percent of the animals in Appendix I already are on the U.S. List of Endangered Wildlife.

During the period between publication of this proposed rulemaking and the final rulemaking, a thorough status survey will be conducted on each species to determine the extent to which such species are endangered or threatened due to any of the following factors: (1) the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; (2) overutilization for commercial, sporting, scientific, or educational purposes; (3) disease or predation; (4) the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or (5) other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

This action is being initiated in response to a petition from The Fund for Animals. Supporting information for the proposal is on file with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. The final rulemaking on these species will be a large undertaking, involving the preparation of necessary status reports on these species, the preparation of environmental assessments, and consultations with States, foreign countries, and others as required by the Endangered Species Act. The final listing process will thus be quite extensive and require many months of effort to complete.

It should also be noted that the Fish and Wildlife Service probably will not publish a final rulemaking which will list all of these species at once. Rather, as status reports and impact assessments on certain groups of species are completed, those species will be listed before proceeding to other groups of species.

All interested persons are invited to submit written comments, suggestions, objections, and factual information concerning this proposal to the Director (FWS/LE), Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. All comments received by November 24, 1975, will be considered.